

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GHINDA HOSPITAL

REF: ASMARA 0215

1. AS PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED, I TODAY ACCOMPANIED REV. JOHN GALBRAITH, GENERAL SECRETARY, COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, IN A CALL ON GEN. GETACHEW TO DISCUSS EPMG INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE GHINDA HOSPITAL OPERATED BY MR. GALBRAITH'S GROUP BUT NOW SHUT DOWN.

2. WHILE MAKING CLEAR THAT HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO TAKE FINAL DECISIONS ON THIS MATTER, MR. GALBRAITH DID STATE THAT IT WAS THE HOPE AND INDEED INTENTION OF THE MISSION TO REESTABLISH THE HOSPITAL IN GHINDA AS SOON AS CONDITIONS PERMIT. MEANWHILE, HE SAID, THE CLEAR PREFERENCE OF HIS GROUP WOULD BE TO KEEP THE PREMISES LOCKED UNTIL THEIR RETURN. AT THIS GEN. GETACHEW INDICATED THAT HE WISHES TO UTILIZE THE FACILITY AS A HOSPITAL, STAFFING IT BOTH WITH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL TO SERVE NOT ONLY THE ARMY AND OTHER EPMG MILITARY UNITS STATIONED IN THE VICINITY BUT THE CIVILIAN POPULATION AS WELL.

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3. MR. GALBRAITH INDICATED A DEGREE OF RECEPTIVITY TO THIS DESIRE, BUT INDICATED THAT A FINAL DECISION ON USAGE OF THE FACILITY WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BY THE COMMITTEE IN PHILADELPHIA. GEN. GETACHEW SAID HE WOULD PUT HIS PROPOSAL IN WRITING SO THAT THERE COULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF GALBRAITH AND HIS COMMITTEE. AT THE SAME TIME MR. GALBRAITH ASKED IF THE CHURCH THAT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED ON THE PREMISES COULD REMAIN OPEN. GEN. GETACHEW SAID YES, AND INDICATED THAT HE WELCOMES THIS IN VIEW OF THE LARGE MOSLEM POPULATION IN THE AREA.

4. AS THE MATTER STANDS NOW, UPON RECEIPT OF GEN. GETACHEW'S LETTER AND ON COMPLETION OF A VARIETY OF OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS IN CONNECTION WITH THE CLOSING OF THE HOSPITAL, MR. GALBRAITH WILL RETURN TO PHILADELPHIA AND MEET WITH THE COMMITTEE. HE EXPECTS THAT A DECISION CAN BE COMMUNICATED TO GEN. GETACHEW BY EARLY APRIL. MEANWHILE THE PREMISES WILL REMAIN UNDER ARMY GUARD, AND MR. GALBRAITH GAVE PERMISSION FOR THE ARMY TO MAKE USE OF THE DRUGS THAT ARE NOW IN ARMY CUSTODY. SHERRY

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